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Manitoba's Post-Secondary System Since 1967: Stability, Change and Consistency

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the transformation of Manitoba's post-secondary education system between 1967 and 2009 using legislative change to gauge structural change. The paper establishes the beginning of the contemporary post-secondary system with the 1967 decision of the Manitoba government to abandon the "one university" system model, a move akin to a "big bang," redefining system norms and expectations, and setting direction which continues to be relevant today. The study revealed extensive structural change in Manitoba's post-secondary system after 1997, the nature of which reflected the trends associated with globalization, but also reflecting the important influence that local forces have had in shaping the province's post-secondary system.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude examine la transformation du système d'éducation post-secondaire manitobain entre 1967 et 2009, qui s'est faite par le biais de changements législatifs afin d'évaluer le changement structurel. Selon l'article, le système post-secondaire contemporain débute avec une décision prise en 1967 par le gouvernement du Manitoba, qui visait à abandonner le modèle systémique d'« une seule université ». Semblable à un « big bang », cette décision redéfinissait les normes et les attentes du système d'éducation, en lui donnant une direction qui est encore pertinente à ce jour. L'étude a révélé la présence d'un changement structurel important dans le système d'éducation post-secondaire au Manitoba après 1997, dont la nature reflète non seulement les tendances associées à la mondialisation, mais aussi l'influence significative qu'ont eues les forces locales dans l'élaboration du système d'étude post-secondaire de cette province.

INTRODUCTION

The study of systems of post-secondary education in Canada has a long history, including in-depth volumes such as Harris (1976), Cameron (1991), and Jones (1997), in addition to a host of journal articles and chapters in collections. In this study, a post-secondary "system" is defined as the distribution of various public and private colleges, universities, and institutes operating within a jurisdiction (Skolnik, 2004a, 2005), plus system governance arrangements. Assessing the structure of a system – the number of institutions, their mandates, and the relationships of institutions relative to

one another and to government – can help to reveal how that system supports and reflects the larger economic and social environment within the jurisdiction in question (Skolnik, 2004a). It can provide foresight in terms of future change, as well as context for the analysis of post-secondary issues.

This paper examines Manitoba's post-secondary system between 1967 and 2009 with a focus on the system's development since 1997 and proposes reasons why those changes have come about. Findings suggest that the development of Manitoba's post-secondary system since 1997 reflects the environment established by a 1967 policy decision to abandon the province's "one university" post-secondary system model, and was influenced by both local and global phenomena.

Supporting this perspective, the paper poses three questions: what are the changes to Manitoba's post-secondary system?; have the changes observed followed any pattern?; and what is behind these changes? To answer these questions, the paper first reviews literature and other documents describing Manitoba's post-secondary system from 1967 to 1997 so as to establish system features. The second part of the paper analyzes legislative amendments and new laws in Manitoba's post-secondary environment from 1997 to 2009, shedding light on more recent developments.

Escotet (2006) states that legislative change is not the same thing as reform, an assertion with which this paper agrees. The perspective taken here is that legislation is an important indicator of system change reflected by the creation of new acts, or amendments to existing acts. In the 12 years between 1997 and 2009, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba approved 48 separate changes to the province's post-secondary legislative framework. Included in these legislative changes were 18 minor changes and corrections, five changes related internal institutional matters (e.g. the authority to control parking), and 25 changes related to substantive amendments to the post-secondary legislative framework. Of these, 12 (six new acts, six amendments) were major changes, and 13 were consequential amendments supporting those major changes. After presenting the theoretical context, a discussion of change in Manitoba's post-secondary system is presented, followed by conclusions.

THE THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Many observers of post-secondary education in Canada have analyzed the impact of globalization on post-secondary systems (Cudmore, 2005; Dennison & Schuetze, 2004; Jones, 2004, 2008; Kirby, 2007; Levin, 2004; Marshall, 2004; Skolnik, 2004a). Globalization's role in Canadian post-secondary education is well recognized, and Skolnik (2005) suggests that it has had two major influences. First, globalization emphasizes economic phenomena in post-secondary education, such as productivity, innovation, and labour force development over civic, cultural, and other non-economic benefits. Second, globalization sees education treated as a commodity to be marketed and traded internationally. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) agree, and argue that post-secondary institutions have for decades been integrating themselves into the neoliberal state, a set of ideas and practices that suggest that individual freedom, property rights, free trade, and markets are best suited to advance the human condition, with the state's main role being to support these phenomena (Harvey, 2005).

Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) argue that the influence of the neoliberal state causes post-secondary institutions' behaviour to shift from a "public good/learning regime" to an "academic capitalism/learning regime" (p. 28), which they go on to define as the increase in networks and managerial capacity that helps to link together the academy (students, faculty, administrators) with the corporate sector. Commodification results from the close relationship between knowledge and the new economy because "in the information society, knowledge is raw material to be converted to products, processes, or services" (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 15) which can then be brought to the marketplace in the form of, among other things, education products (degrees, skills), or research products (patents, trademarks, new processes, etc.).

Commodification, Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) argue, encourages market-like behaviour within the academy. They cite as examples institutions establishing prices for things that were either at one time free (as sublime as research outcomes or as banal as computer or recreation facilities), or offered at cost (such as parking or food services), or broader institutional strategies such as the advertising of programs and degrees as educational products. They also suggest that departments and disciplines respond to the integration of the academy into the new economy by establishing strategies to position themselves for greater success. By establishing distinctive features such as specialization in one

area (research, professional programming, applied studies), institutions position themselves within the post-secondary market so as to be better able to attract students, staff, and investment in the form of research grants, sponsorship, or some other benefit. Accordingly, academic capitalism helps to establish an explanation for the diversification of post-secondary systems, a phenomenon that has also been observed in Canada (Cudmore, 2005; Dennison & Schuetze, 2004; Jones, 2004; Levin, 2004; Marshall, 2004, 2008; Skolnik, 2004a).

Supporting Harvey's (2005) contention that the state's role is to support economic development in a neoliberal context, Kirby (2007) found that governments are actively pursuing economic policy outcomes when formulating post-secondary policy. He proposes that such outcomes include, among other things, internationalization, privatization, and marketization as well as a general strengthening of the ability of universities and colleges to support labour market development, helping to reify the neoliberal influence on post-secondary system, threatening to overemphasize the economic purposes of post-secondary education (Skolnik, 2004a).

Accordingly, the concept of academic capitalism helps the analyst of post-secondary education understand the relationship between local decisions and global influences. Abstract concepts such as diversification and commodification are better understood as local decisions made within a broader context; globalization provides strategic context, but tactical decisions may be local in nature.

Speaking specifically about globalization and institutionalism, Levin (2004) argues that institutions can resist external influences to the point of being able to retain their distinctive character while at the same time responding and adapting to global needs, displaying both global and local identities; global and local influences are not mutually exclusive and instead interact together in complex ways (Jones, 2008).

Ideas surrounding the concept of neo-institutionalism help to establish theoretical explanations for local decision making. In neo-institutional thought, institutions such as laws, traditions, values, ideologies, and social and cultural norms are important forces that structure human behaviour (Atkinson & Coleman, 1996; Dill, 2003; Kato, 2004). Pal (1997) picks up on these institutional forces and links them to governmental decision-making dynamics, arguing that governments "think through their options on the basis of what is currently in the field of underpinning policy efforts... as long as normal politics is incremental politics, the temptation is to build on existing and fairly finely graduated policy instruments" (p. 104).

The historical branch of neo-institutional thought helps to explain Pal's perspective. Historical neo-institutionalism posits that past actions have an impact on future decisions (Peters, 1999). Thelen and Steinmo (1992) argue that institutions are characterized by long periods of stability, interrupted by formative events that can change their trajectory. Thus, a key event, decision, or action can change the nature of an institution, "[bringing] about relatively abrupt institutional change, after which institutional stasis again sets in," redefining institutional norms, rules, and expectations (p. 15). This in turn provides context that shapes actors' interpretations of problems and decisions surrounding solutions to those problems (Howlett, 2003).

Thus, when formulating post-secondary policy responses in the face of the economic context provided by globalization demanding more education and at higher levels, governments may be more willing to go with what they've got rather than establish new ways of doing things. This means viable options for change in post-secondary systems may include building on existing institutions rather than creating wholly new ones, modifying existing institutional mandates, and/or legitimizing existing institutions previously on the periphery through the provision of funding, degree-granting authority, or some other recognition. Given that in the Canadian context such changes are typically made in legislation and regulations, governments are directly involved in responding to both global and local influences. Within this context, it may be very difficult to identify system change as being "global" or "local" in origin.

Douglass (2005) argues that there is a need to analyze post-secondary education at the local level to better understand the influences of globalization. This observation is particularly relevant for Canada where the "national" post-secondary system is really a collection of provincial systems sharing many things in common but also exhibiting important differences. With Douglass' observation in mind, the remainder of this paper will limit its analysis to an examination of the development of Manitoba's contemporary post-secondary system.

MANITOBA'S POST-SECONDARY SYSTEM SINCE 1967

Today's post-secondary system in Manitoba emerged from a 90-year history where the University of Manitoba (U of M) was the principal post-secondary-education authority in the province. As Morton (1957), Gregor (1974, 1995), and Saunderson (1981) document in detail, until 1967 the direction of the early post-secondary system was integration, working towards achieving "one university," whereby all post-secondary education fell under the academic and, increasingly, the administrative, authority of the U of M. Indeed, by the 1950s, all colleges in the province were affiliated with the U of M and all but United College and Brandon College had relocated to the U of M's Fort Garry campus (Gregor, 1995).

As a result of significant enrolment growth, and in part as a celebration of Canada's Centennial year (Saunderson, 1981), Manitoba's government abandoned the one university system design in 1967, passing the *Universities Establishment Act*. This act created the University of Winnipeg and Brandon University, institutions that were formerly affiliated with the U of M as United College and Brandon College respectively.

The decision to abandon the one university model was akin to a "big bang" in Manitoba's post-secondary system, establishing the background environment against which change was considered. This environment included a set of norms and assumptions about a system incorporating multiple autonomous universities with specific roles and mandates, and a college system for technical training, with the entire system coordinated through government authority. It is within this post-big-bang set of norms that government and institutional decision makers operated, and within which Manitoba's post-secondary system continues to evolve.

The immediate impact of the big bang was that Manitoba was to have three major universities. One, the U of M, was to focus on a broad array of undergraduate, graduate, and professional education, while the others, Brandon University and the University of Winnipeg, both focused on general undergraduate education. Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface (CUSB) would remain an affiliated college of the U of M, albeit with an enhanced status as the locale of French-language post-secondary education in the province (Skolnik, 1997). However, in the three decades after the big bang, Manitoba experienced little in the way of structural change in the system.

1967–1997: Institutional Stability

Higher education policy development in Canada in the two decades after 1970 was both modest and incremental (Skolnik & Jones 1992), an observation that is also true in Manitoba between 1967 and 1997. After initial changes associated with the big bang, Manitoba's post-secondary system, like most in Canada, continued to experience considerable dynamism in terms of enrolment growth and changes to internal governance processes within the institutions themselves in terms of the role of students and faculty on boards and senates, as well as the establishment of faculty unions. However, the broad structure of the system itself – the types, numbers and mandates of institutions established in the late 1960s – remained generally the same.

Manitoba's Universities. When adding Winnipeg and Brandon to the suite of universities in the province, Manitoba's government was concerned about duplication of courses and faculties that would add to the costs of the system (Saunderson, 1981). Accordingly, government determined that these two universities would be unable to establish new faculties until the matter had been discussed with the U of M (Saunderson, 1981). In practice, this meant that only the U of M could offer professional or graduate programming, and between 1967 and 1997, only a few graduate programs and one professional program (i.e. Education) were approved at the two new universities. Thus, the addition of two universities did not signal a wholesale abandonment of the one-university model, rather "a revised policy was adopted, declaring that the U of M – because of its size, scope and resources – would remain the centre for professional and graduate studies within the province" (Gregor, 1995, p. 8). Structurally, however, Manitoba was no longer a one-university province.

Community Colleges in Manitoba. Harris (1976) has noted that within the context of the overall history of post-secondary education, community colleges are recent additions. In Manitoba, the Manitoba Technical Institute was first established in 1948 (Harris, 1976), the Brandon Vocational Training Centre in 1961, and the Northern Manitoba Vocational Centre in 1966 (Gregor, 1997). In 1969, these three institutions became respectively Red River Community College (today Red River

College), Assiniboine Community College, and Keewatin Community College (Gregor, 1997). These were established as non-degree-granting institutions creating options for the large numbers of baby-boom students entering post-secondary education (Harris, 1976). While technical training was not a significant part of the post-secondary education system before 1967, after the establishment of the community colleges in 1969, technical training became increasingly important. Nevertheless, the colleges remained subordinate and somewhat isolated in the post-secondary system (University Education Review Commission, 1993).

One of the few structural changes that took place before 1997, was the 1993 establishment of board governance for community colleges through the creation of the *Colleges Act*. Previously, colleges operated as line units of the education department, and were subject to tight government control (Gregor, 1995). Board governance brought greater independence to the colleges, as well as set the basis for a more integrated post-secondary system (Gregor, 1995). For the purposes of the current analysis, the 1969 creation of community colleges and the subsequent move to board governance in 1993, represented an important structural change to Manitoba's post-secondary system, establishing new relationships within the system.

System Coordination. Prior to 1967, coordination was achieved through the Board of Governors of the U of M, and technical training, representing only a minor part of the overall post-secondary system at the time, was not considered. The move away from the one university model saw a new approach to system coordination develop in Manitoba – an interesting development given that most efforts since 1967 have been away from institutional integration. Indeed, the drive towards coordination represents a countervailing force to the general policy trend in post-secondary education, but also represented a growth in government oversight in what had become a large and costly system. Since 1967, university coordination was achieved by means of a government-appointed buffer agency which assessed the needs of the system and allocated resources (Gregor, 1995). In 1967, the nine-member Universities Grants Commission (UGC) was established, ultimately replaced in 1997 by the eleven-member Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE), both of which served as the replacement for the one university model as the mechanism providing greater coherence to the system.

During the 1970s, government briefly established a Department of Colleges and Universities Affairs which primarily focused on colleges and left universities to the Universities Grants Commission, but was ultimately rolled into a single department concerned with all aspects of education, a departmental structure which remained in place until the early 2000s. This departmental structure had some impact on colleges but little effect on the UGC or on universities (Gregor, 1995).

A more long-lasting coordinating feature in the province's post-secondary system was the *Universities Establishment Act*, which outlined a common legislative framework for the governance of the University of Winnipeg and Brandon University. The 1993 *Colleges Act* was similar in concept to the *Universities Establishment Act* in that the colleges' legislation established individual colleges through regulation, and created through the larger *Act* governance features, a mandate, and reporting relationships to government that were shared by the three community colleges.

Between 1967 and 1997, Manitoba's post-secondary education system had evolved into a binary system of public universities and public non-degree-granting community colleges (Gregor, 1997) coordinated through a variety of measures, including a comprehensive department of education, an arm's-length buffer agency for universities, and legislation creating common structures and governance features for some institutions in the system. Much of this was to change after 1997.

1997–2009: Institutional Individuation

If Manitoba's post-secondary system between 1967 and 1997 was characterized by stability, the system since 1997 has been characterized by considerable structural change. Orton (2003), Malcolmson & Lee (2004), and Skolnik (2004b) argue that post-secondary education in Canada has entered a period of more radical transformation, with consensus that the backdrop for transformation is associated with the impact of globalization and related changing patterns of economic activity, although it is difficult to point to a specific date when globalization 'started' in any particular jurisdiction. In the context of Manitoba's post-secondary system, an early statement regarding the impact of globalization can be found in the 1993 report of the University Education Review Commission. That

Commission, established to review university education in Manitoba in the light of the fiscal issues of the day, noted that the structure of the system was inadequate for the needs of the new economy. The Commission recommended structural changes, such as, for example, enhancing the role of community colleges and revamping the province's buffer agency to give it greater powers for planning and coordination to help ensure greater relevance to the needs of the province (University Education Review Commission, 1993), and, in particular, of the economy (Saunders, 2006).

Since 1997, system development has been defined by the further breakup of the system into its constituent parts and the strengthening of government coordination: after 1997, a period of expansion and diversification occurred with the modification of existing institutions into new institutional types, the establishment of new relationships within the system, and an expansion of institutional mandates. Underlying many of these changes were economic and local considerations.

New Institution Types. The first of two new institution types created since 1997 was the Canadian Mennonite University, an amalgamation of three existing private Mennonite colleges (Menno Simons College, Concord College, and the Canadian Mennonite Bible College). The new university was established in 1998 by the *Mennonite Colleges Federation Act* after a decades-long discussion among Mennonites regarding post-secondary education within that community (Krueger, 1998). When being debated in the Legislative Assembly, then Minister of Education and Training Hon. Linda McIntosh indicated that the Mennonite "university will fit into Manitoba's post-secondary system and provide top quality education and contribute to the cultural diversity and economic strength of this province" (Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 1998b). Thus, the establishment of the Canadian Mennonite University addressed important local considerations, but also attended to the beliefs of government regarding the economic purposes of post-secondary education.

The second new institution type, University College of the North, was established in 2004 by the *University College of the North Act*, again after a long discussion regarding higher education and Aboriginal and northern community development (University Education Review Commission, 1993). University College of the North, established from and replacing the former Keewatin Community College, was given degree-granting authority, and was removed from under the legal framework of the *Colleges Act*. This new institution type in Manitoba was based on the British Columbia model, blending university and college programming (Loxley, 2009). Additionally, in order to better reflect the unique needs of northern Manitoba in relation to its population, University College of the North was provided with unique governance features such as consideration in legislation of the Aboriginal population in the north in terms of membership on the Governing Council, as well as the establishment of an advisory Council of Elders in legislation.

While Aboriginal and northern considerations were important, so too were economic considerations. In a debate on the bill establishing University College of the North (UCN), the then Minister of Advanced Education, Hon. Diane McGifford, told the Legislature that the government's "education strategy, including UCN, is essential to our economic strategy. Education and economic development go hand in hand. Aligning post-secondary education with labour market needs and thus creating a skilled workforce which is poised and ready to fill jobs is also key to the overall development of the North" (Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 2004). This statement, coming six years after the Canadian Mennonite University was established by a different minister and a different government, suggests consistency in terms of the economic focus of post-secondary policy, as well as the importance of local community considerations.

The establishment of these institutions signalled important structural changes to Manitoba's post-secondary system. For the first time, a private degree-granting university was established and included within the same governing framework as the public universities (i.e. *Council on Post-Secondary Education Act*), albeit modified somewhat through a separate agreement. Importantly, this development is consistent with Kirby's (2007) notion of privatization, reflecting an increased focus on non-public deliverers of education in Manitoba. Further, the establishment of UCN as a northern, Aboriginal-focused institution represents institutional diversification, and was based both on economic and community needs.

New Relationships. A total of six major legislative changes established new relationships within the system. Two of these six amendments relate to system coordination. In 1997, and as a result of the University Education Review Commission (1993), the *Council on Post-Secondary Education* (COPSE)

Act was proclaimed, replacing the Universities Grants Commission (UGC), and continuing the 30-year-old concept of the post-secondary buffer agency in Manitoba. The establishment of COPSE increased coordination through its legislative powers relating to, like the UGC, program approval, capital, and operating funding, but also system planning, credit transfer and articulation, institutional mandates, system accountability, performance monitoring, responsibility for community colleges, and other provisions that were not part of the UGC's remit.

While COPSE was to have greater coordinating powers than the UGC before it, it was also clear from the outset that COPSE was to play a more active role in ensuring that activities in the post-secondary sector were better connected to the economic priorities of the province (Saunders, 2006). As former Minister of Education and Training Clayton Manness stated, the post-secondary governance structure represented by COPSE was configured "so that the link between education and the government's economic priorities would be maintained" (Saunders, 2006, p. 316).

Another piece of coordinating legislation, the *Degree Granting Act*, was passed in 2006 in response to the potential establishment of an unwanted private degree-granting institution, and was intended to be "an interim measure while consideration is given to a more detailed process to assure quality in post-secondary education in Manitoba" (Council on Post-Secondary Education, 2007, p. 24). With this act, Manitoba for the first time established controls over the power of institutions to grant degrees, vesting this power in the Legislative Assembly because the new law required that an institution's degree-granting authority be included in legislation. Upon introduction in the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Diane McGifford, Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy, advised the House that the bill was required in order to ensure the reputation of Manitoba's post-secondary system and that Manitoba's colleges and universities remained a reputable destination for international students (Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 2006).

While the act was motivated by the desire to control unwanted degrees in the province and represents a first step towards a more robust system of quality assurance, the minister interpreted the act for the Legislature as being in part important to protect the reputation of Manitoba's post-secondary system vis-à-vis the international student market. The Act changed the relationship between government and the post-secondary system, suggesting that government was to be more heavily involved in determining quality, and those determinations would in part be based on considerations related to factors such as, for example, the international market for students.

Further changes in relationships within the system were signalled through a 1998 amendment to the *Council on Post-Secondary Education Act* establishing Section 27.1 – an amendment allowing COPSE to fund institutions to which the *COPSE Act* otherwise does not apply. Under this section, three private religious degree-granting colleges (i.e. Providence College, Steinbach Bible College, and William & Catherine Booth College) began receiving funding through COPSE. Discussing this amendment in the Legislative Assembly, then Minister of Education and Training, Hon. Linda McIntosh, noted that the purpose of the bill was to further strengthen the ability of COPSE to coordinate all aspects of the post-secondary system (Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 1998a). Skolnik (1997) has noted that religious higher education in Canada has been marginalized in the overall post-secondary environment. In Manitoba, private religious colleges have become better integrated into the mainstream system, including incorporation into the system's funding regime with the express intention of inclusion in system coordination, thereby establishing a formal relationship with COPSE that did not exist previously.

Three acts passed by the Legislature relate to further individuation within Manitoba's post-secondary system, creating additional new relationships. Two of these acts provided separate legislation for Brandon University and the University of Winnipeg in 1998, taking a final step in the process began in 1967 when the two universities were first created under the *Universities Establishment Act*. Motivation for this change stemmed from the 100th anniversary of the founding of Brandon College (Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 1998b) – a move which at the same time necessitated the granting of separate legislation for the University of Winnipeg.

A third legislative amendment in 2005 to *Le Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface Incorporation Act*, was prompted by the findings of an investigation by Manitoba's Auditor General into allegations of wrongdoing (Office of the Auditor General, 2003). These amendments ensured Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface (CUSB) remained an affiliated college under the *University of Manitoba Act*, but it also strengthened CUSB's autonomy vis-à-vis the U of M, establishing for the Collège a larger Board

of Governors that for the first time included government-appointed representatives, as well as authorizing CUSB to enter into academic relationships with institutions other than the U of M – a specific issue that was identified as being problematic in the Auditor General's 2003 report.

Summing up the new relationships in the system, legislative change since 1997 saw the creation of stronger coordination processes that were in part related to ensuring better connection of the post-secondary system to economic priorities. Additionally, legislative changes established greater diversification and greater autonomy and independence for institutions in the system, revising relationships between institutions.

Expanded Mandates. This third dimension of structural change to Manitoba's post-secondary system includes four legislative amendments. Three of these amendments are associated with degree-granting authority, and a fourth is related to the ability of community colleges to establish Adult Learning Centres on their campuses.

Expansion of degree-granting powers for William and Catherine Booth College (Booth College) occurred in 2002 and aligned with the educational priorities of Booth College's parent organization, the Salvation Army (Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 2002a; Stanley & Stanley, 1997). The specific amendments removed the minister's role in approving degree programs, and provided the college with the ability to offer degrees in any academic area. Furthermore, the "Purposes and Objects" section of Booth College's legislation was expanded, adding to the objects of the institution a mandate to offer "university-level" programs. This phrase was a key consideration for COPSE in its 2008 decision to allow Booth College to use the term "university" in advertising (Council on Post-Secondary Education, 2009), easing restrictions against the use of that term by private religious institutions in the province and enhancing the status of private post-secondary education generally.

A significant expansion of degree-granting powers occurred in 2009 as a result of a lobbying effort led largely by Red River College (Council on Post-Secondary Education, 2008) where degree-granting authority was given to community colleges and to École Technique et Professionnelle, the college division of Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface. These amendments brought Manitoba's colleges into line with many elsewhere in Canada where college degrees are becoming a more regular feature (Floyd *et al*, 2005). Degree-granting authority represents a significant addition to the mandate of colleges, and has the potential to change perceptions held of the colleges generally, as well as enhancing the role colleges play in labour-force development. Indeed, when introduced, then provincial competitiveness minister, Hon. Andrew Swan, stated that college degrees were "critical for the continued development of our skilled workforce" (Manitoba, 2009), emphasizing the role that college degrees will play in labour force development.

Institutional mandates were also expanded through amendments in 2002 to the *Colleges Act* allowing the colleges to establish Adult Learning Centres, a new type of educational institution that provides high school credit and upgrading (Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy, 2008). The creation of Adult Learning Centres came about as a result of an investigation by the Auditor General of Manitoba into allegations of financial mismanagement (Office of the Auditor General, 2001). The amendments themselves are interesting because they suggest stronger links between post-secondary education and adult education in Manitoba. Dr. Ben Levin, Advanced Education Deputy Minister in 2002, wrote that Adult Learning Centres are

a unique education enterprise in Manitoba... strongly linked to secondary schools and post-secondary institutions through their governance structures, and in many cases through joint programs with high schools, colleges or universities... [Adult Learning Centres] can and do have strong partnerships with high schools... and with post-secondary institutions, thus building new bridges across sectors. (Levin, 2005, pp. 174–175)

The creation of Adult Learning Centres at colleges are a sign of growing links between the adult education system (consisting of functions such as education upgrading, General Education Development testing, and literacy) and the post-secondary system, and are the beginnings of a new relationship in the education system. Aspects of adult education, such as literacy, have been shown to be important to success in post-secondary education (Bloom, Burrows, Lafleur, & Squires, 1997; Canadian Council on Learning, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2003; Strawn, 2007), and stronger ties between these

two sectors could be important for improving educational outcomes. The legislation is also another indicator of the relationship between the economy and education. As the Hon. Drew Caldwell, then Minister of Education and Training, stated,

government has consistently maintained that education is central to our economic development strategy and adult learning is a vital part of this. Manitoba cannot afford to have large numbers of adults whose education does not qualify them to obtain challenging employment and participate fully as citizens. (Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 2002b)

CONCLUSION

This article has examined the changing structure of the post-secondary education system in Manitoba, and has found that much change has taken place since 1997, a result of both local and global considerations. At the outset, three research questions were posed to help structure analysis and to allow for a more detailed understanding of developments in Manitoba's post-secondary system.

The first research question sought to identify patterns of development in Manitoba's post-secondary system since 1967. This has been answered throughout the paper. The development of Manitoba's post-secondary system since the late 1960s has been characterized by two distinct periods. After the "big bang" in 1967, the structure of the system remained relatively stable while enrolment increased dramatically. The second period, starting in 1997, saw significant change to the system's structure, with new institution types established, existing institutional mandates redefined, and new relationships created.

The second research question, relating to the consistency of change, has also been addressed. There have been a series of separate legislative amendments which have been consistent with the 1967 decision to move away from the one-university model. This does not by any stretch represent a system plan, nor is there evidence that this action was articulated by successive governments as a motive for pursuing structural change in the system. Nevertheless, observed changes are so consistent that one cannot reasonably ascribe them to the luck of unintended consequences; the big bang reset expectations and norms within the system, providing a stable, flexible, and predictable institutional environment that guided governments generally as they pursued legislation affecting the structure of the post-secondary system.

The third research question asked what was behind the changes to the post-secondary system in Manitoba. The review of the Manitoba government's post-secondary legislative agenda after 1997 revealed a series of amendments and new laws facilitating increased focus on global phenomena identified by Kirby (2007), including internationalization, privatization, marketization, and a greater connection to labour-force development. Thus, the changing economic climate established an environment whereby it was acceptable, and perhaps even expected, that government would focus more on the potential of post-secondary education vis-à-vis the economy. However, it is important to note that the policy focus was not solely economic; local considerations, for example, the specific needs of the Mennonite community pertaining to the establishment of the Canadian Mennonite University, the centennial anniversary of Brandon College leading to the creation of the *Brandon University Act*, or implementation of the recommendations from an audit of Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, also help to explain legislative amendments affecting the structure of Manitoba's post-secondary system.

This paper has examined Manitoba's post-secondary system since 1967. For the first 30 years since then, the system was characterized by stability, but after 1997 it entered a period of significant structural dynamism. The paper attributes this more recent dynamism to both global and local influences. This conclusion is not to downplay the role of globalization prior to 1997. Slaughter (1998) found that Canadian post-secondary systems have been invested in academic capitalism and were pursuing increased integration with the new economy, and Metcalfe (2010) has suggested that this has been the case since some time in the late 1990s. Indeed, this finding is consistent with the present article's finding that, after 1997, Manitoba's post-secondary education system saw significant structural change that supported concepts associated with globalization, including facilitating a greater focus on internationalization (through the *Degree Granting Act*), the strengthening of private post-secondary providers (for example, the Canadian Mennonite University), and a greater focus on the development of the labour force (for example, college degrees, strengthened coordination).

The congruency of the structural change with globalization is significant in that it represents integration into the very fabric of the post-secondary system of the tenets of the new economy. In neo-institutional terms, the norms and expectations of the post-secondary system have been reset in terms of the structural context which supports continued institutional individuation consistent with the 1967 big bang in Manitoba's post-secondary system, and also in terms of the economic context represented by globalization. Accordingly, both institutional individuation and globalization are likely to continue to shape decision makers' thinking regarding future post-secondary policy directions in Manitoba. ♣

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